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Remarks:  
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(54) **Activated carbon and method for producing it**

(57) Activated carbon obtained by activating a carbonaceous material is processed with an acid at an elevated temperature. The acid-processed activated carbon has a strong affinity for water, and is favorable to water purification. Electrodes produced by shaping the acid-processed activated carbon have the advantage of large electrostatic capacity per unit volume, and are favorable for capacitors.

## Description

**[0001]** The present invention relates to activated carbon and a method for producing it. More precisely, the invention relates to activated carbon obtained by activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing it with an acid, and to a method for producing it. The activated carbon of the invention has a strong affinity for water and is favorable to water purification. In addition, as its electrostatic capacity is large, the activated carbon is favorable to electrodes for electric double-layer capacitors.

**[0002]** Activated carbon is widely used in various fields of food industry, chemical industry, medicine industry, etc. The adsorbability of activated carbon is essentially utilized in those fields, in which, however, adsorbents having more adsorbability are desired. Recently, electric double-layer capacitors have come to be specifically noted for backup power and power assist, and many developments concerning the capability of activated carbon for electrodes to electric double-layer capacitors are being made in the art. With the development of electronics, electric double-layer capacitors comprising polarizable electrodes of activated carbon are now in great demand, as their electrostatic capacity is large. Recently, such electric double-layer capacitors have been being much used even in large-scale power assist devices, for example, in motors and the like, in addition to conventional, a back-up power source for micro computer memories.

**[0003]** The principle of electric double-layer capacitors was known from the past, but use of them in practical devices has been made these days. The electrostatic capacity of electric double-layer capacitors is essentially governed by the surface area of the polarizable electrodes therein to form electric double layers, and by the electric double-layer capacity per the unit surface area and the resistance of the electrodes. In practically using such electric double-layer capacitors, it is important to increase the density of the electrodes therein for increasing their electrostatic capacity per unit volume and for reducing their volume. For electric double-layer capacitors, for example, heretofore used are (1) activated carbon prepared by activating a carbonaceous material of resin, coconut shell, pitch, coal or the like in an acidic condition, for example, in steam or acidic gas (see Large-Scale Capacitor Technique and Material, published by CMC in 1998), (2) activated carbon prepared by activating the above starting materials with a chemical of high oxidizability, such as potassium hydroxide or the like (see W091/12203, JP-A-199767/1998), etc.

**[0004]** Activating a carbonaceous material with an alkali compound using it for polarizable electrodes for electric double-layer capacitors is known. For example, JP-A-139865/1989 discloses a method of heating carbon fibers in an inert gas atmosphere at a temperature higher than 500°C in the presence of an excessive amount of an alkali metal hydroxide to prepare carbon

fibers having a large surface area. JP-A-258996/1993 discloses an electrode for electric double-layer capacitors, which is produced by activating carbon fibers (these are prepared by melt-spinning a starting material of pitch followed by heating the resulting fibers) with an aqueous solution of an alkali metal hydroxide, then deashing, grinding and shaping them into electrodes. JP-A-161587/1995 discloses an electrode for electric double-layer capacitors, which is produced by activating a carbonaceous material with steam and then with an alkali metal hydroxide followed by grinding and shaping it into electrodes.

**[0005]** As so mentioned hereinabove, it is desired to increase the adsorbability of adsorbents and to increase the electrostatic capacity of electrodes for capacitors. However, the activated carbon produced in the method (1) could not ensure high electrostatic capacity, and it must be in large-sized devices in order to ensure the necessary electrostatic capacity. On the other hand, in the method (2), the starting carbonaceous material is activated with an activator of high oxidizability, such as potassium hydroxide or the like at a high temperature. The activated carbon obtained therein could have high capacity in its degree, but is still unsatisfactory for the recent requirement for higher capacity. The materials disclosed and proposed in JP-A-139865/1989, JP-A-258996/1993 and JP-A-161587/1995 are also not satisfactory.

**[0006]** The object of the present invention is to provide activated carbon having the advantage of high adsorbability for impurities dissolved in water and the advantage of large electrostatic capacity, and to provide a method for producing it.

**[0007]** We, the present inventors have assiduously studied, and, as a result, have found that the problems noted above can be solved by activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing the resulting activated carbon with an acid at an elevated temperature. On the basis of this finding, we have completed the present invention. Specifically, one aspect of the invention is activated carbon prepared by activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing it with an acid. Another aspect is an electrode for electric double-layered capacitors, which is produced by shaping the activated carbon. Still another aspect is a method for producing activated carbon, which comprises activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing the resulting activated carbon with an acid at an elevated temperature.

**[0008]** Fig. 1 is an IR absorption spectrum of one activated carbon of a carbonaceous material BP-20 processed with sulfuric acid.

**[0009]** Fig. 2 is an IR absorption spectrum of another activated carbon of a carbonaceous material BP-20 processed with sulfuric acid.

**[0010]** Fig. 3 is an IR absorption spectrum of one activated carbon of a carbonaceous material BP-20 processed with 10 % nitric acid.

[0011] Fig. 4 is an IR absorption spectrum of a carbonaceous material BP-20.

[0012] Fig. 5 is a schematic view showing a scheme of one embodiment of a capacitor in which the electrodes are made of the activated carbon of the invention. In this, 1 indicates a collector, 2 indicates a collector, 3 indicates a polarizable electrode, 4 indicates a polarizable electrode, 5 indicates a separator, and 6 indicates a cover.

[0013] The carbonaceous material for use in the invention is not specifically defined, and may be any and every one capable of being activated into activated carbon. For example, it includes carbonaceous coconut shell, petroleum and/or coal pitch, cokes, phenolic resin, polyvinyl chloride, etc. The morphology of the carbonaceous material is not specifically defined, including, for example, granules, particulates, fibers, sheets, etc.

[0014] Examples of the fibrous or sheet-like carbonaceous materials are natural cellulosic fibers such as cotton, etc.; regenerated cellulosic fibers such as viscose, rayon, polynosic rayon, etc.; pulp fibers; synthetic fibers such as polyvinyl alcohol fibers, polyethylene-vinyl alcohol fibers, etc., as well as woven fabrics, non-woven fabrics, films, felts and sheets of such fibers.

[0015] Activated carbon can be prepared by activating the carbonaceous material. For activating it, any known method is employable. For example, the carbonaceous material may be activated with an oxidizable chemical, such as zinc chloride, phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, calcium chloride, sodium hydroxide, potassium bichromate, potassium permanganate or the like (chemical activation); or with steam, propane gas, exhaust gas generated from combustion gas which is a mixture of  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , carbon dioxide gas or the like (gas activation).

[0016] Preferably, however, the carbonaceous material is activated with an alkali (alkali activation) as the resulting activated carbon can ensure higher electrostatic capacity. For such alkali activation, employable is any known method described, for example, in *Electrochemistry*, 12 (1998), pp. 1311-1317; *Carbon*, 177 (1997), pp. 76-79, etc. The alkali includes, for example, alkali metal hydroxides such as sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, etc.; alkaline earth metal hydroxides such as calcium hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, etc. Especially preferred are sodium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide. The amount of the alkali to be used preferably falls between 0.01 and 10 parts by weight, relative to 100 parts by weight of the carbonaceous material to be processed with it, but is more preferably from 0.1 to 10 parts by weight in view of the operability and the safety of the process.

[0017] In the invention, the activated carbon such as that prepared in the manner as above is processed with an acid at an elevated temperature. The acid includes, for example, mineral acids such as concentrated sulfuric acid, fuming sulfuric acid, diluted nitric acid, phosphoric acid, polyphosphoric acid, pyrophosphoric acid, meta-

phosphoric acid, etc.; sulfonic acids such as methanesulfonic acid, ethanesulfonic acid, benzenesulfonic acid, toluenesulfonic acid, etc. Especially preferred are concentrated sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid and polyphosphoric acid. More preferred is polyphosphoric acid. In general, one of these acids is used alone, but they may be combined in any desired manner for acid treatment.

[0018] In case where the carbonaceous material is activated in known chemical activation or gas activation with any of steam, propane gas, exhaust gas generated from combustion gas which is a mixture of  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , carbon dioxide gas or the like, and not in alkali activation, the resulting activated carbon may be processed with an aqueous solution of sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid or the like. In that case, the acid concentration for the treatment may fall between 0.01 and 100 % by weight, but preferably falls between 0.1 and 80 % by weight in view of the reaction efficiency, the operability and the safety of the process, more preferably between 0.5 and 60 % by weight. In case where the activated carbon is processed with diluted nitric acid, it is desirable that the concentration of the aqueous solution of the acid falls between 5 and 20 % by weight.

[0019] The amount of the acid to be used for the treatment may fall between 0.01 and 100 times by weight of the activated carbon to be processed with it, but preferably falls between 0.1 and 50 times by weight in view of the reaction efficiency, the operability and the safety of the process, more preferably between 0.5 and 20 times by weight. The processing temperature varies, depending on the type of the acid used, and therefore cannot be determined indiscriminately. Preferably, however, the acid-processing temperature is lower than the temperature for activation but is higher than room temperature, for example, falling between 30°C and 500°C, more preferably between 40°C and 300°C. The acid treatment may be effected in an air atmosphere, but is preferably effected in an inert gas atmosphere of, for example, nitrogen, argon or the like for safety. The treatment may be effected under any pressure, but is generally effected under atmospheric pressure.

[0020] The acid-processed activated carbon is put into water to remove the acid from it. Washing it with water is enough for the acid removal. In case where the excessive acid still remaining therein has some influence on the capability of the activated carbon, it may be removed through neutralization. After the acid has been removed from it, the activated carbon is dried at room temperature or under heat under atmospheric pressure and/or reduced pressure. However, in case where the activated carbon is formed into electrodes, too much drying it in this stage is meaningless. In that case, therefore, the activated carbon will be dried in some degree not interfering with its capability for electrodes.

[0021] Preferably, the activated carbon of the invention shows an absorption peak in a range of from 1600 to 1800  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in its IR spectrum. For IR spectrometry of

the activated carbon, employable is any known method including, for example, a powder or solid reflection method, a liquid paraffin dispersion method, a KBr tablet method (hereinafter referred to as a KBr method), etc. The amount of the activated carbon for its IR spectrometry is not specifically defined, so far as IR rays can pass through it. Concretely, the concentration of the activated carbon in the KBr method may fall between 0.001 and 10 % by weight, relative to KBr, but preferably between 0.01 and 5 % by weight, more preferably between 0.05 and 2 % by weight. Fig. 1 is an IR absorption spectrum of the activated carbon of Example 3 to be mentioned below; Fig. 2 is an IR absorption spectrum of the activated carbon of Example 5; Fig. 3 is an IR absorption spectrum of an activated carbon having been processed with 10 % nitric acid at 120°C for 6 hours; and Fig. 4 is an IR absorption spectrum of an activated carbon of phenolic resin (Kuraray Chemical's BP-20) not processed with an acid.

[0022] The activated carbon obtained herein has a strong affinity for water. Directly or after having been shaped, it may be used for treating water in water purifiers in which it acts to remove minor harmful substances such as free chlorine, trihalomethanes, chloroform and others from water. For capacitors, it is preferably shaped into electrodes. For shaping the activated carbon into electrodes, employable is any known method. Concretely, for example, the activated carbon is, optionally after well mixed with up to a few % of commercially-available polytetrafluoroethylene or the like well known as a binder, molded in a mold under pressure, or rolled into sheets and stamped out into electrodes having a desired shape. In the process, the activated carbon may be heated, if desired. However, heating it too much is undesirable, since the binder optionally mixed with it will be degraded and, in addition, the physical properties of the activated carbon intrinsic to the surface structure thereof, for example, the relative surface area thereof will be negatively influenced by such high-temperature heat treatment. Needless-to-say, therefore, special attention should be paid to the temperature condition in the process.

[0023] While the activated carbon is shaped, an electroconductive substance such as electroconductive carbon, fine metal particles or the like may be added thereto to lower the resistance of the electrodes to be produced. Adding such an electroconductive substance to the activated carbon is effective for lowering the internal resistance of polarizable electrodes to be produced and for reducing the volume of the electrodes. The electrodes thus produced are preferably installed in electric double-layer capacitors which are for practical use. The scheme of one embodiment of the capacitor is shown in Fig. 5, in which 1 and 2 are collectors, 3 and 4 are polarizable electrodes comprising the activated carbon of the invention, 5 is a separator made of a non-woven polypropylene fabric or the like, and 6 is a cover made of a stainless material or the like.

## EXAMPLES

[0024] The invention is described more concretely with reference to the following Examples, which, however, are not intended to restrict the scope of the invention.

KBr method:

[0025] A mixture of 10 mg of activated carbon and 1 g of KBr was molded into a tablet under a pressure of 1,000 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> for an hour by means of a press-forming machine. The tablets were analyzed by infrared absorption spectroscopy.

Reference Example 1:

[0026] 10 g of coconut shell carbon (Kuraray Chemical's YP-17)

that had been activated in an atmosphere of exhaust gas generated from combustion gas which is a mixture of CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O was put into a three-neck flask equipped with a thermometer and a stirrer, to which was added 20 g of concentrated sulfuric acid. With that, the flask was purged with nitrogen. With its contents being stirred, the flask was put into an oil bath heated at 200°C, and its contents were kept stirred for 2 hours. The resulting mixture was poured into 500 g of water with ice. The thus-processed, activated carbon was well dispersed therein, then taken out through filtration, and washed with 2 liters of ion-exchanged water. After thus washed, the activated carbon was dried under heat at 100°C under reduced pressure. Its weight was 10.7 g.

Reference Example 2:

[0027] 10 g of coal pitch (ADCHEMCO's PM-BL) and 85 % potassium hydroxide were put into a 2-inch Hastelloy reactor equipped with a thermometer and a stirrer. The reactor was purged with nitrogen, and its contents were heated to 700°C in a nitrogen stream atmosphere at a heating rate of 200°C/hr. At 700°C, this was kept stirred for 2 hours, and then cooled to room temperature over a period of 2 hours. Nitrogen having been passed through a distilled water bubbler was kept introduced into the reactor for 1 hour, and the mixture in the reactor was neutralized with aqueous 10 % hydrochloric acid, and then washed with distilled water to remove the salts. After dried, 6.8 g of pitch carbon was obtained.

[0028] 6 g of the pitch carbon was put into a three-neck flask, to which was added 20 g of concentrated sulfuric acid. With that, the flask was purged with nitrogen. With its contents being stirred, the flask was put into an oil bath heated at 200°C, and its contents were kept stirred for 2 hours. The resulting mixture was poured into 500 g of water with ice. The thus-processed, activated carbon was well dispersed therein, then taken out through filtration, and washed with 2 liters of ion-

exchanged water. After thus washed, this was dried under heat at 100°C under reduced pressure. The weight of the thus-processed, activated pitch carbon was 5.8 g.

#### Reference Example 3:

**[0029]** Carbonaceous phenolic resol resin (Showa Polymer's BBL141B) and not coal pitch was processed in the same manner as in Reference Example 2. Herein obtained was 4.1 g of acid-processed, activated phenolic resin carbon.

#### Reference Example 4:

**[0030]** 50 g of sulfuric acid and 20 g of non-woven fabric of activated carbon (Kuraray Chemical's ACF) were put into a glass vat, in which the non-woven fabric was thus dipped in sulfuric acid for 30 minutes at room temperature. After thus dipped, the non-woven fabric was taken out of the vat and left as it was for 30 minutes to remove the liquid from it. Next, this was dried in a nitrogen stream atmosphere for 15 minutes and then in a drier furnace under heat at 220°C for 15 minutes. The thus-dried, non-woven fabric of activated carbon was put into 200 g of pure water, and the acid was removed from it. This treatment was repeated three times, and it was confirmed that the pure water used was not acidic. The thus-processed non-woven fabric was dewatered, and dried in a hot air drier at 50°C, and then further dried in vacuum at the same temperature for 10 hours. Thus processed with sulfuric acid and dried, the weight of the non-woven fabric of activated carbon was 19.3 g.

#### Example 1, Comparative Example 1:

**[0031]** 200 g of the activated carbon obtained in Reference Example 1 was packed into a cylindrical container having an inner diameter of 40 mm and a length of 90 mm. On the other hand, 2 ppm, in terms of the free chlorine concentration, of sodium hypochlorite was added to river water having a total organic carbon (TOC) concentration of 2.5 ppm. To this were added chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane and dibromochloromethane of 50 ppb, 20 ppb, 20 ppb and 20 ppb, respectively, to prepare test water. The thus-prepared test water was passed through the container at a flow rate, space velocity (SV) of 600 hr<sup>-1</sup>, for 2 hours. Thus processed, the test water was analyzed according to JIS K-0125 to measure the amount of chloroform and the total amount of the four trihalomethanes therein. The amount of chloroform therein was not larger than 2 ppb, and the total amount of the trihalomethanes was not larger than 8 ppb. For comparison, the same test water was passed through the coconut shell carbon (Kuraray Chemical's YP-17) not processed with acid, and analyzed in the same manner as above. The amount of chloroform therein was 50 ppb, and the total amount of the trihalomethanes was 90 ppb.

#### Example 2:

**[0032]** The activated carbon obtained in Reference Example 1 was ground into activated carbon powder having a mean particle size of from 5 to 20  $\mu$ . A mixture of 80 % by weight of the activated carbon powder, 10 % by weight of electroconductive carbon and 10 % by weight of polytetrafluoroethylene was prepared by kneading them. Next, the mixture was rolled into a sheet having a thickness of 300  $\mu$ m, and stamped out into circular discs having a diameter of 2 cm. The discs were dried at 150°C under reduced pressure for 4 hours. These serve as sheet electrodes.

**[0033]** In a glow box having a dew point of not higher than -80°C, a collector electrode, a polarizable electrode sheet of the disc, a non-woven polypropylene fabric, a polarizable electrode sheet of the disc, and a collector electrode were laminated in that order on a stainless cover as shown in the Fig. 5, and a propylene carbonate solution containing 1 mol of tetraethylammonium tetrafluoroborate was infiltrated into the polarizable electrodes. With that, the stainless cover was sealed with an insulating gasket of polypropylene. Using a Hioki Electric's double-layer capacitor tester, the electric double-layer capacitor thus fabricated herein was tested to measure its electrostatic capacity. Briefly, it was subjected to 10 charge-discharge cycles at room temperature, to which the constant current applied was up to 2.5 V. The mean value of the electrostatic capacity of the capacitor was read on the discharge curve obtained in the test, and it was 15.4 F/cc.

#### Examples 3 to 10, Comparative Examples 2 and 3:

**[0034]** Activated carbon of phenolic resin (Kuraray Chemical's BP-20) was processed with an acid in the same manner as in Reference Example 1 (Examples 3 to 5, 7, 8 and 10). Activated carbon YP-17 was processed with an acid also in the same manner as in Reference Experiment Example 1 (Examples 6 and 9). Activated carbons, BP-20 and YP-17 not processed with an acid are Comparative Examples 2 and 3, respectively. These were tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry, and their data obtained are given in Table 1. The IR spectra of the activated carbons of Example 3, Example 5, Example 10, and Comparative Example 2 are given in Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

Table 1.

	Carbonaceous Material	Acid Treatment	Electrostatic Capacity (F/cc)	IR Peak in KBr Method (cm <sup>-1</sup> )
Example 2	YP-17	sulfuric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	15.4	1715
Example 3	BP-20	sulfuric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	16.7	1710
Example 4	BP-20	sulfuric acid, 100°C x 2 hrs	15.8	1711
Example 5	BP-20	sulfuric acid, 250°C x 2 hrs	17.1	1726
Example 6	YP-17	polyphosphoric acid, 140°C x 2 hrs	15.0	1715
Example 7	BP-20	polyphosphoric acid, 140°C x 2 hrs	16.5	1720
Example 8	BP-20	phosphoric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	15.6	1720
Example 9	YP-17	aqueous 10 % nitric acid, 120°C x 6 hrs	15.0	1720
Example 10	BP-20	aqueous 10 % nitric acid, 120°C x 6 hrs	16.5	1710
Comp. Example 2	BP-20	not treated	14.1	1580
Comp. Example 3	YP-17	not treated	12.7	1580

Example 11:

[0035] The pitch carbon processed in Reference Example 2 was tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry, in the same manner as in Example 2. Its data obtained are given in Table 1.

Examples 12 to 14:

[0036] The carbonaceous materials in Reference Examples 2 and 3 were processed with an acid under the condition indicated in Table 2 below. Thus processed, the activated carbons were tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry, in the same manner as in Example 2. Their data obtained are given in Table 2.

Comparative Examples 4 and 5:

[0037] Not processed with an acid, pitch coal and resin coal were tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry, in the same manner as in Example 2. Their data obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2

	Carbonaceous Material	Acid Treatment	Electrostatic Capacity (F/cc)	IR Peak in KBr Method (cm <sup>-1</sup> )
Example 11	pitch coal	sulfuric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	24.0	1720
Example 12	resin coal	sulfuric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	21.2	1715
Example 13	pitch coal	polyphosphoric acid, 140°C x 2 hrs	24.3	1718
Example 14	resin coal	polyphosphoric acid, 140°C x 2 hrs	20.1	1720
Comp. Example 4	pitch coal	not treated	22.0	1550
Comp. Example 5	resin coal	not treated	19.1	1575

## Example 15:

[0038] The non-woven fabric of activated carbon obtained in Reference Example 4 was stamped out into circular discs having a diameter of 2 cm. The discs were dried at 150°C under reduced pressure for 4 hours. These serve as sheet electrodes. In a glow box having a dew point of not higher than -80°C, a collector electrode 2, a polarizable electrode sheet of the disc 4, a non-woven polypropylene fabric 5, a polarizable electrode sheet of the disc 3, and a collector electrode 1 were laminated in that order on a stainless cover 6, as in Fig. 5, and a propylene carbonate solution containing 1 mol of tetraethylammonium tetrafluoroborate was infiltrated into the polarizable electrodes. With that, the stainless cover was sealed with an insulating gasket of polypropylene. Using a Hioki Electric's double-layer capacitor tester, the electric double-layer capacitor thus fabricated herein was tested to measure its electrostatic capacity. Briefly, it was subjected to 10 charge-discharge cycles at room temperature, to which the constant current applied was up to 2.5 V. The mean value of the electrostatic capacity of the capacitor was read on the discharge curve obtained in the test, and it was 40.1 F/g. The activated carbon used herein was analyzed through IR spectrometry, and its IR peak is given in Table 3 below.

## Example 16:

[0039] Polarizable electrodes were produced in the same manner as in Example 15. In this, however, the non-woven fabric of activated carbon was processed with phosphoric acid. The activated carbon was tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry. Its data obtained are given in Table 3.

## Example 17:

[0040] Polarizable electrodes were produced in the same manner as in Example 15. In this, however, the non-woven fabric of activated carbon processed with sulfuric acid was dried at 200°C for 2 hours. The activated carbon was tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry. Its data obtained are given in Table 3.

## Comparative Example 6:

[0041] Polarizable electrodes were produced from the non-woven fabric of activated carbon not processed with an acid. The activated carbon was tested for electrostatic capacity and analyzed through IR spectrometry. Its data obtained are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Carbonaceous Material	Acid Treatment	Electrostatic Capacity (F/g)	IR Peak in KBr Method (cm <sup>-1</sup> )
Example 15	sulfuric acid, 220°C x 15 min	40.1	1715
Example 16	sulfuric acid, 220°C x 15 min	38.3	1718
Example 17	sulfuric acid, 200°C x 2 hrs	39.2	1720
Comp. Example 6	not treated	31.1	1530

[0042] According to the present invention, there is obtained activated carbon having a strong affinity for water and having a large electrostatic capacity. The activated carbon is favorable to water treatment. After shaped, it is favorable for electrodes for capacitors.

[0043] While the invention has been described in detail and with reference to specific embodiments thereof, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

#### Claims

1. Activated carbon produced by activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing it with an acid.
2. The activated carbon as claimed in claim 1, which is activated with an alkali.
3. The activated carbon as claimed in claim 1 or 2, which is processed with a mineral acid.
4. The activated carbon as claimed in claim 3, which is processed with sulfuric acid or diluted nitric acid.
5. The activated carbon as claimed in claim 3, which is processed with any of phosphoric acids.
6. The activated carbon as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, of which the IR absorption peak in IR spectrometry is seen in a range falling between 1600 and 1800 cm<sup>-1</sup>.
7. An electrode for electric double-layer capacitors, which is produced by shaping the activated carbon of any of claims 1 to 6.
8. A method for producing activated carbon, which comprises activating a carbonaceous material followed by processing it with an acid at an elevated temperature.



FIG.1

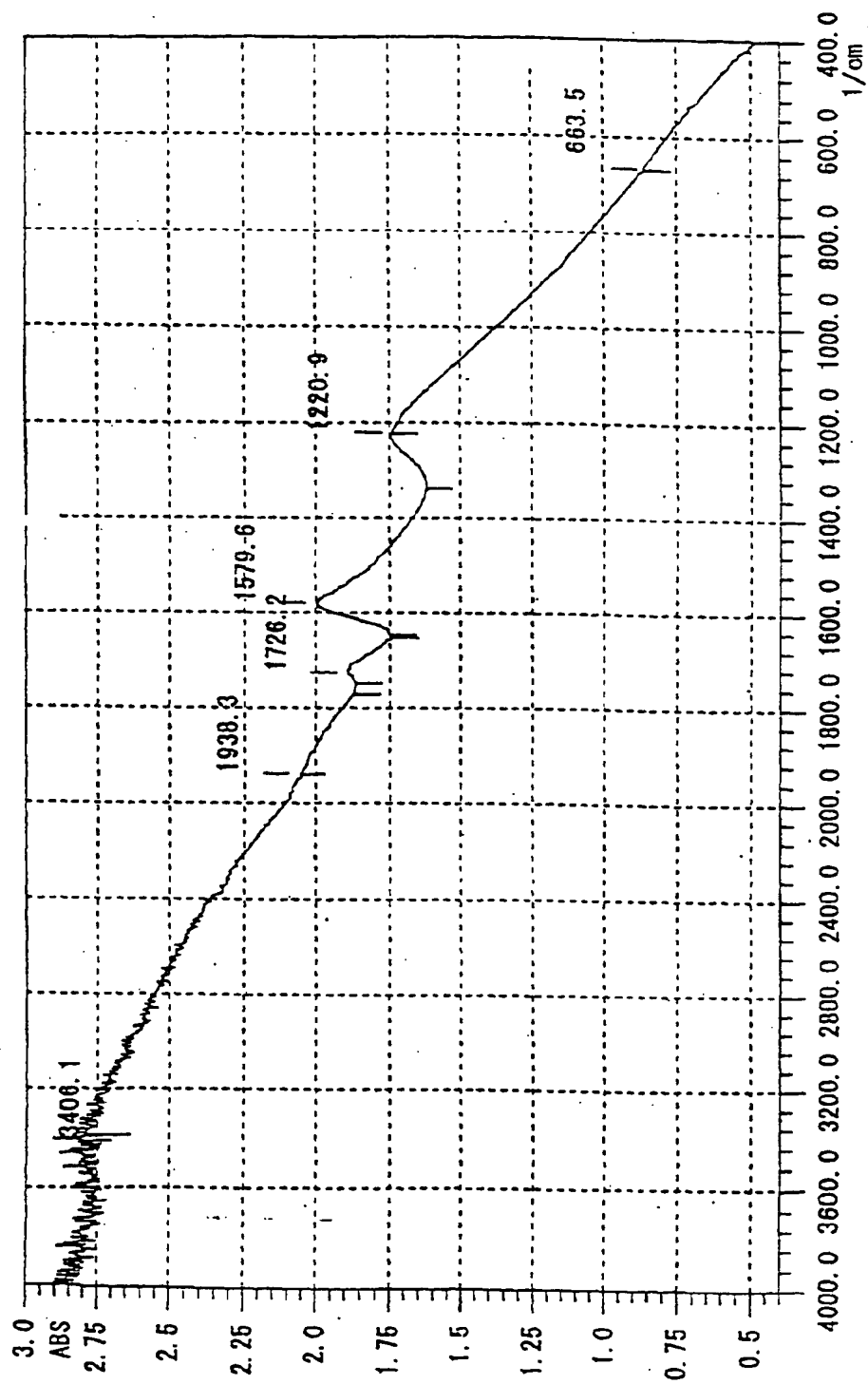


FIG.2

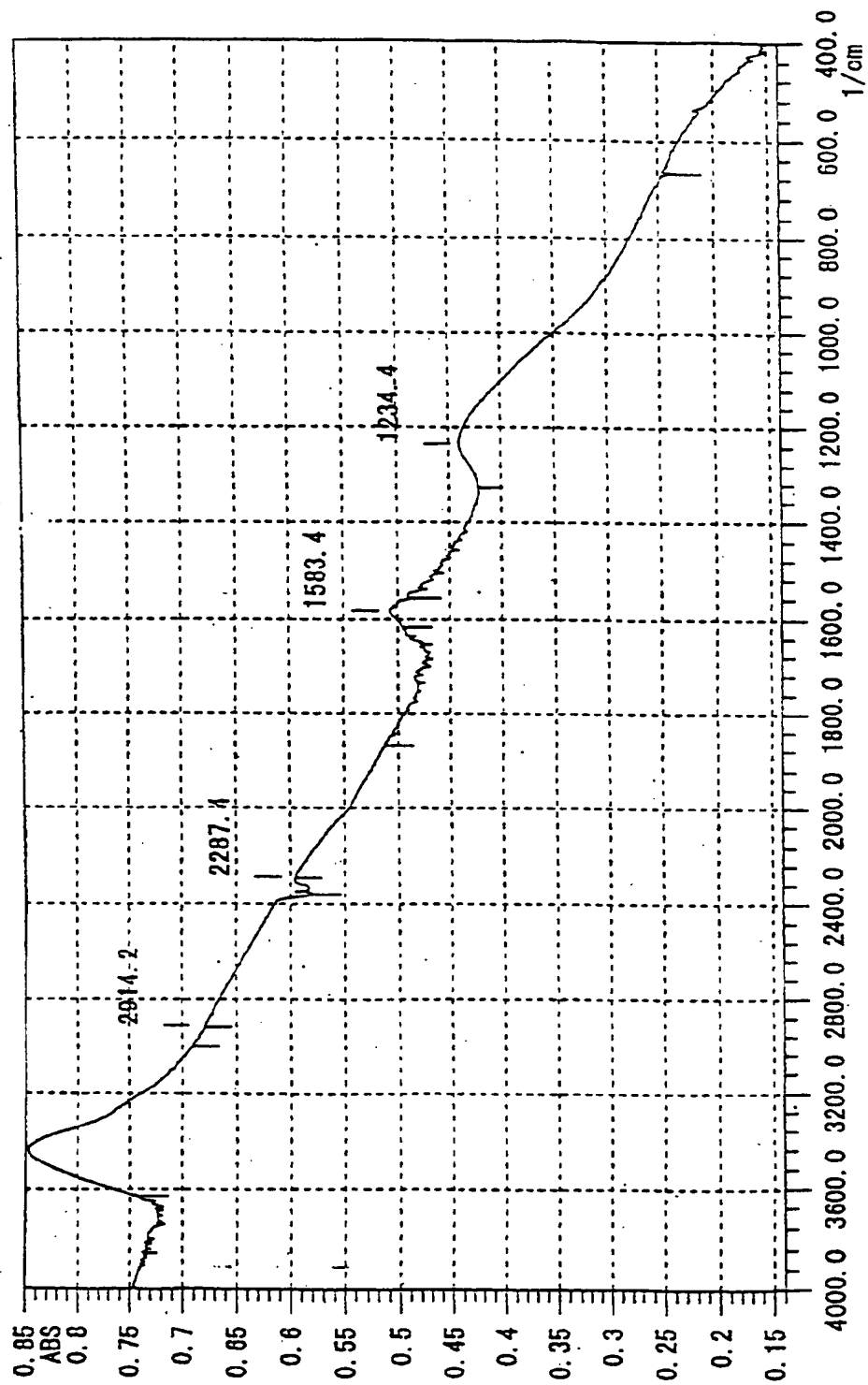


FIG.3

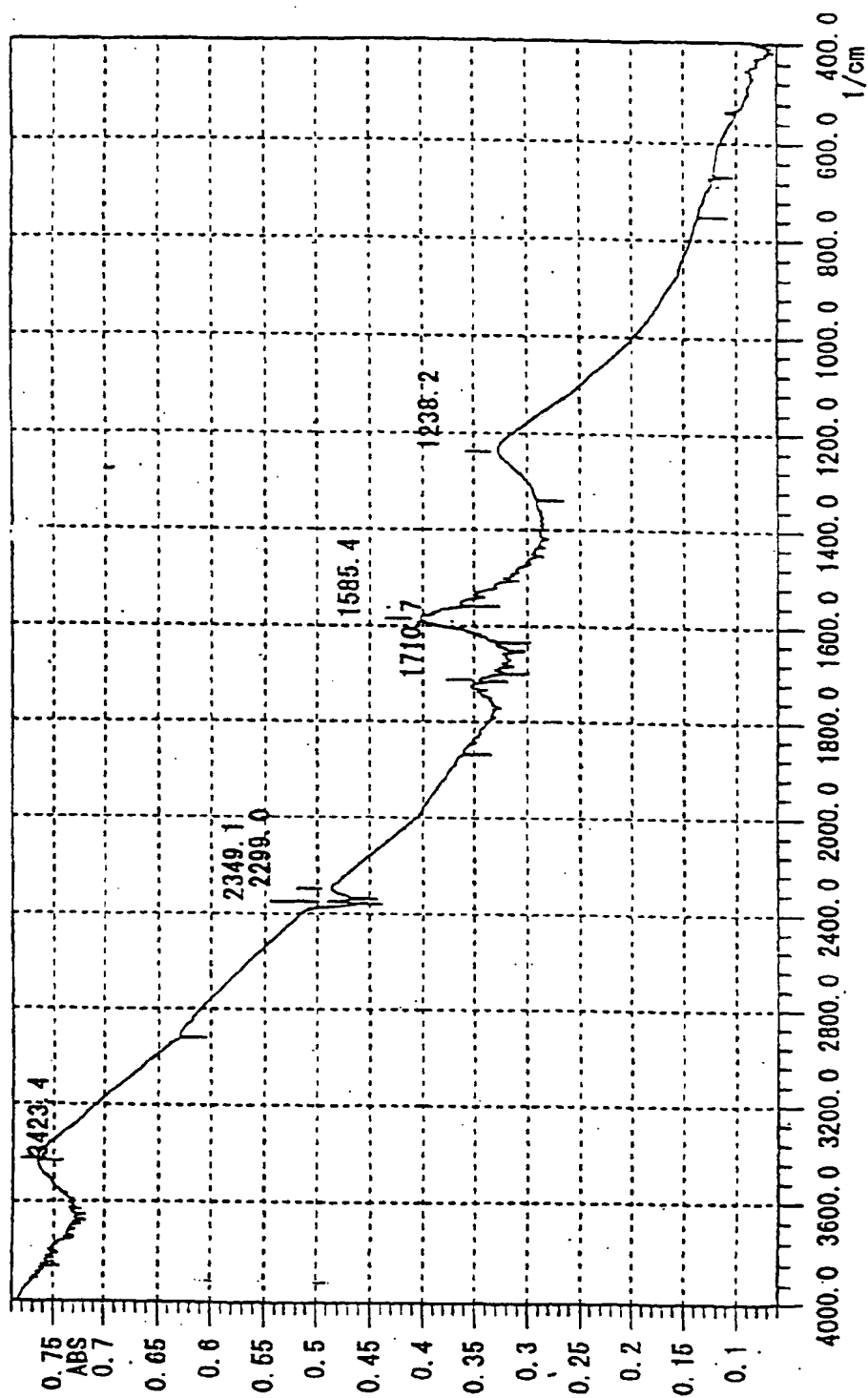


FIG. 4

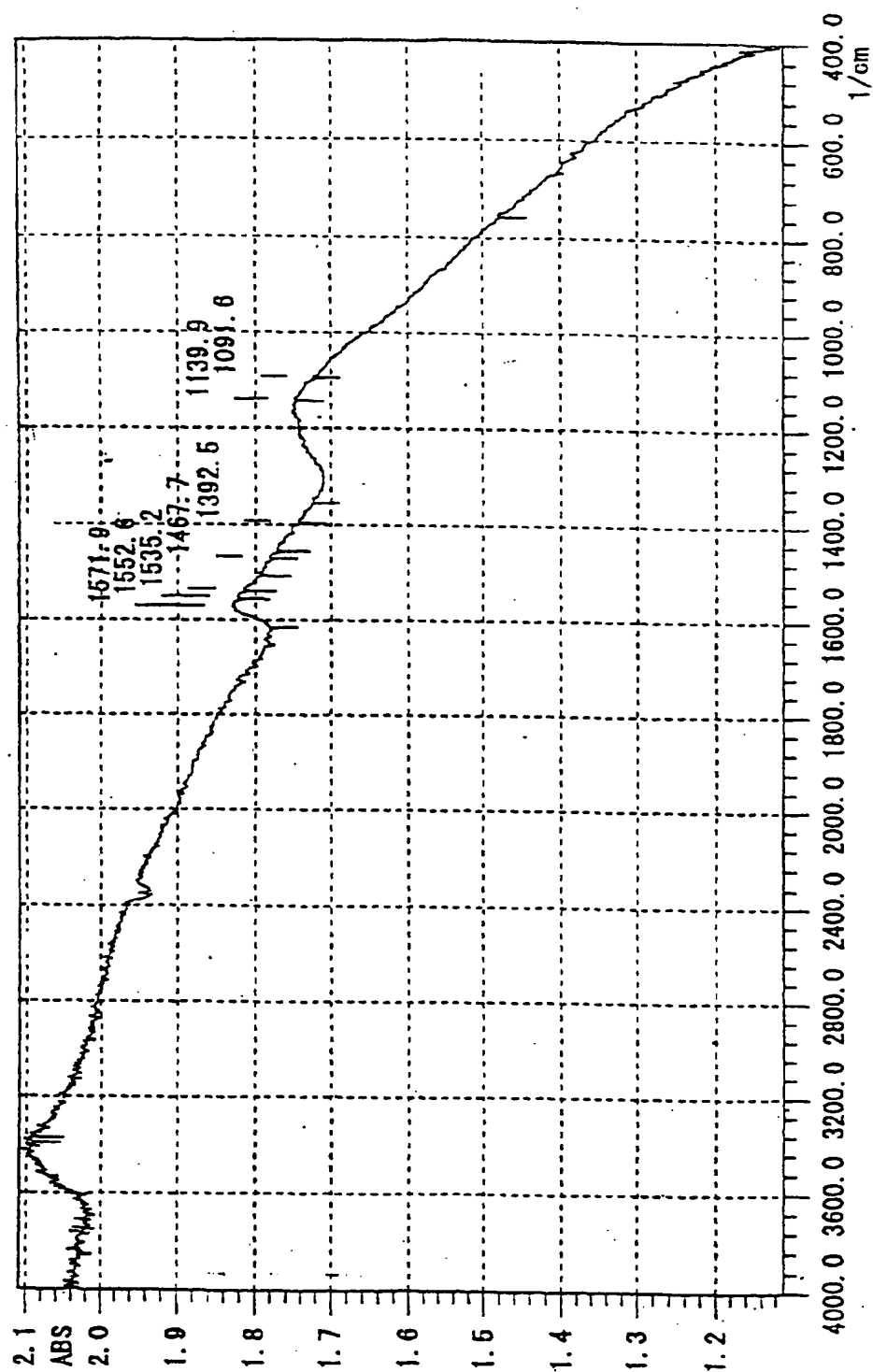


FIG.5

